

## **Peer Review Plan: Listing Decision for the acuña cactus (*Echinomastus erectocentrus* var. *acunensis*) and the Fickeisen plains cactus (*Pediocactus peeblesianus* var. *fickeiseniae*)**

### **About the Document**

**Title:** The Service will remove the Acuña Cactus and Fickeisen Plains Cactus from the candidate list. To remove these species from the candidate list means to propose them for listing as threatened or endangered or to prepare a not warranted finding. A listing proposal will include proposed critical habitat, if prudent and determinable. Following a listing proposal, a final listing determination will follow within the statutory timelines.

### **About the Peer Review Process**

**Estimated Peer Review Timeline:** September 2012 to January 2012

#### **Peer review process:**

- If appropriate, we will solicit comments from three or more independent peer reviewers with expertise in the species' ecology. This scientific peer review will be held concurrently with the public review.
- Peer reviewers will not be asked to provide recommendations on the listing determination or designation of critical habitat. Peer reviewers may be asked to comment specifically on the quality of any information and analyses used or relied on in the document; identify oversights, omissions, and inconsistencies; provide advice on reasonableness of judgments made from the scientific evidence; ensure that scientific uncertainties are clearly identified and characterized, and that potential implications of uncertainties for the technical conclusions drawn are clear; and provide advice on the overall strengths and limitations of the scientific data used in the document.
- Peer reviewers will be selected based on the following criteria:
  - Expertise in the appropriate species' ecology.
  - Independence: Reviewers will not be employed by the Service. Academic and consulting scientists should have sufficient independence from the Service, if the government supports their work.
  - Objectivity: Reviewers will be recognized by their peers as being objective, open-minded, and thoughtful. The reviewers should be comfortable sharing their knowledge and identifying their knowledge gaps.
  - Advocacy: Reviewers will not be known or recognized for an affiliation with an advocacy position regarding the protection of these species under the Endangered Species Act.
  - Conflict of Interest: Reviewers will not have any financial or other interest that conflicts or that could impair their objectivity.

- If appropriate, the Service will use the information received from the peer review in the final rule for listing and designating critical habitat.
- The estimated start date of the peer review will be August 15, 2012

### **About public participation**

If appropriate, the proposed critical habitat will be made available to the public through news releases, direct mailings, and will be posted on Service websites with solicitations for public comment. The Service will implement an outreach plan to provide ample opportunity for public involvement in the review process. If appropriate, the Service will publish a final listing and designation of critical habitat following consideration of all comments received from the public and peer reviewers. This peer review plan is made available to allow the public to monitor our compliance with the Office of Management and Budget's Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review.

### **Contact**

For more information, contact Julie Crawford, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona Ecological Services Field Office, at 520-670-6150 extension 228. Also see the species' profiles via the Service's Endangered Species website, at:  
<http://ecos.fws.gov/speciesProfile/profile/speciesProfile.action?spcode=Q00U> and at  
<http://ecos.fws.gov/speciesProfile/profile/speciesProfile.action?spcode=Q1C9>. A copy of the final listing decision will be posted on this site upon completion.